

THE RADYR AND MORGANSTOWN ASSOCIATION

(A Civic Society affiliated to the Civic Trust for Wales)

President: Rhodri Morgan

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NEWSLETTER TO MEMBERS – May 2014

Welcome to our regular Newsletter – a little later than usual, but we have been busy!

Introduction. As Chair of the RMA I wanted to start the newsletter by saying *Thank You* to the Executive Committee and all the people who helped us at events during the Festival. It was a fabulous two weeks with 35 events and mostly good weather. All the feedback we have had has been very positive. I believe the Festival was a great success for both the charity LATCH and the community as a whole with several events sold out. Taking over as Chair just a month before the Festival is not the easiest thing to do but I thoroughly enjoyed all the events I attended and I hope you all did as well. Now that it is over it is already time to think about next year as we need to plan really early if we are going to have any new event. If you have any ideas for new events please let any of the committee know.

There has been a lot happening in our community in the last month or so with the post office announcement, the proposed Nat West closure and the LDP. There is more about these later on.

One thing I am very conscious of is the small size of the RMA Executive Committee. We are a small group who are, not to put too fine a point on it, ageing. We really need both new members and also some younger members; none of us can carry on indefinitely. The Association have asked a number of times for new members to join us but get few volunteers. Without new members it is unclear how long we will be able to continue. Our Festival is the envy of many communities and I have not found any other that puts on anything like the range of events that we do for an area as small as ours. So, whilst we congratulate ourselves after another brilliant fortnight, please think about coming along and joining us or the future may not be so rosy. We still hear people saying they were unaware of events happening, though that will always be the case. So one of the things I would like to do over the next few months is to look at communications – how we do it now, what could we do to improve it and are there other methods we can employ. We will say more about this in future Newsletters.

So my first month and a half as Association Chair are over, and hopefully I can now sit down and rest for a bit and think about the future, though not for very long as planning for the Xmas lighting event will have to start soon. *David Silver*

Festival 2014. As David has said, the 2014 Festival is over, and a busy and enjoyable time was had by all. We could give you a report here but David Cargill has written an excellent illustrated article for *Radyr Chain* and we suggest you read all about it there. You will read that, although we presented LATCH with an interim cheque for £6500 at the concert on the last Saturday, we are pretty confident that the R&M Community will have raised at least £11000 for the Charity over the year – by far the most we have ever raised and a wonderful testament for all involved. We also presented the Ken Innes Cup to Chris Dale for his superb work during the Festival and at other RMA events during the year.

Film Club. The first airing during the Festival of the Film Club in the Old Church Rooms was a qualified success. *Philomena* was an ideal choice of film and the 72 seats sold out very quickly. We were surprised by the response and by the goodwill and interest in a regular film showing. Over the summer we will be visiting a similar venue at Llancarfan to see how we can improve matters for our audience. Three further screenings have been scheduled in September, October and November: at the moment there is a discussion as to whether we meet on Tuesday or Friday evenings.

The audience at *Philomena* were asked what films they would like to see and *Saving Mr Banks* was the outright favourite for an autumn showing with *August Osage County*, *Mandela*, *The Invisible Woman* and *The Grand Budapest Hotel* closely following. By the autumn, of course, a new list of even more up to date films will be available.

If you have any comments to make about the future of the Film Nights, please get in touch (details below).

Facebook. We launched our new Facebook page, the “Radyr & Morganstown Hub” at the start of December. Since then it has been growing in popularity and is going from strength to strength. We now have over 250 people who have “liked” the page, which means they always see whatever we post on their own newsfeed. We used it extensively during the Festival and advertised just about every event, where possible with pictures or posters. We get data on how often our individual posts are seen so we know that each of our posts was viewed

by between 100 and 1000 people, depending on the event. We obviously don't know whether this got more people to come to the events but it certainly did no harm and got the message across. We would encourage all our local clubs and societies to use the page and post your own events, programmes, requests etc. on it. If you can't, then send it to us at events@radyr.org.uk and we will do it for you. Whether people like it or not, social media is a key way to communicate these days and we believe the "hub" compliments both the Website and the Radyr Chain. One big advantage is that you can put things on yourself at any time and it is there immediately.

Cardiff Local Development Plan. Cardiff is in the final stages of the creation of the LDP. The specific proposals will go to Cardiff's Cabinet on 12th June and it is expected to be approved by the full Council shortly afterwards. The next stage is for the Council to submit the Plan in August to the Welsh Government for examination. It will be assessed by an Independent Inspector, appointed by the Welsh Government. There will be a final public hearing prior to the formal adoption of the Plan in October 2015.

As notified in previous Newsletters, the Association has been working closely with the R&M and other North West Cardiff Community Councils (collectively known as the North West Cardiff Group, NWCG) plus, more recently, Cardiff Civic Society, to try to ensure the LDP does what it says on the tin – to create a sustainable plan for Cardiff up to 2026 which will achieve all the aims originally set out. To put it simply at this stage, we have great fears it will not and Cardiff might well impede the effective development of SE Wales for years to come.

If you have been following all the discussions and reading the many, many documents produced (which are still viewable on the R&M Website in the Community Council section) you will appreciate just how crucial the correct and thoughtful development of NW Cardiff is to both the Plan and SE Wales. Fundamental to the development is the building of the Metro; think of it as the 'Crossrail Project' for Wales. If Cardiff goes ahead with the current proposals for development in NW Cardiff – essentially just extending existing communities – the new Metro (which has to follow the track of an old railway line) will not be able to serve those developments; they will be too far away. And, without the passengers, there will be no business case to build the Metro; despite all that everyone is currently saying, it will not happen. Cardiff Civic Society have laid out detailed plans for a series of new communities to be developed along the line of the Metro and built as the line progresses. They have proposed that the communities could be built by establishing a 'New Town Development Corporation' that would buy the land at non-development prices and sell it to developers at development prices. This will both regulate the development and generate a substantial sum that would be fed back into local infrastructure, like the building of the Metro itself. The current proposal will allow the Plymouth Estates to sell the land at full value and take the increased profit – around £1Bn – out of Wales. Senior members of the NWCG have met with Cardiff Council Officers and the Cabinet member for the LDP, Cllr Patel. Their response was that 'it could not be done'. We wonder who is pulling their strings.

Cardiff Council have made it very clear that there will be no alignment of the development in the NW with the Metro and that a new bus will provide public transport in the meantime. This is a disaster for the future of Cardiff.

At the moment, we are not sure what to do about this now. The NWCG has been in touch with a number of influential people, including our AM Mark Drakeford and Roger Lewis, the Chairman of the new Cardiff Capital Region Board. They agree with what we are saying and we can only hope that Cardiff will either see sense or be forced to do so by the Welsh Government. There may be a 'call to arms' in the near future if they do not.

Post Office and the Bank. To end up this section of gloom and doom, you will be aware of the letter we sent regarding the Post Office changes and the linkage to the Bank closing. We have had no response. We hope you wrote as well. We will let you know as soon as we know the outcome.

Hanging Baskets. A quick positive note. We plan to put back the baskets in Station Road next week!

Meetings. Our next meeting will be on Monday, 16th June, when Simon Davison will be giving a talk entitled 'Beyond the Cello'. He has told us he is thinking of talking about Welsh National Opera and the challenges it faces with its cuts in Arts Council grants and why the company makes certain choices on repertoire. Simon is a very active local resident and the talk will be really worth coming to. Make sure you attend! Mark Drakeford AM will be the next speaker, on Monday, 15th September. If you have read through the previous bits of this Newsletter, there may be questions you would like to ask him...

If you would like to comment on any aspect of this Newsletter or require further information, then either email the Secretary, Nick Hawkins (rma@radyr.org.uk), or ring the Chairman, Dr David Silver, on 029 2084 4337.